

PILATES REFORMER

WHAT IS A PILATES REFORMER?

The reformer was invented by Pilates founder Joseph Pilates. It is a bed-like frame with a flat platform on it, called the carriage, which rolls back and forth on wheels within the frame. The carriage is attached to one end of the reformer by a set of springs. The springs provide choices of differing levels of resistance as the carriage is pushed or pulled along the frame. The carriage has shoulder blocks on it that keep practitioners from sliding off the end of the reformer as they push or pull the carriage.

At the spring end of the reformer, there is an adjustable bar called a foot bar. The foot bar can be used by the feet or hands as a practitioner moves the carriage. The reformer also has long straps with handles on them that are attached to the top end of the frame. They can be pulled with legs or arms to move the carriage as well. Body weight and resistance of the springs are what make the carriage more or less difficult to move. Reformers parts are adjustable for differing body sizes and different different levels of skill.

BENEFITS FROM THE REFORMER

The reformer offers all the benefits of Pilates, including overall strength, flexibility, coordination, and balance. These things, in turn, lead to daily life improvements, like better posture, graceful and efficient movement, and for many, relief from pain associated with physical imbalances such as back pain.

The Pilates powerhouse muscles--the muscles of the core-- are paramount for building strength. Flat abs, strong backs, toned buttocks, and firm thighs are all results of this emphasis. Other equipment and Pilates mat exercises do that too, but the reformer creates a unique and varied exercise environment.

The reformer is large enough to accommodate full-range motion, which is wonderful for increasing flexibility while building strength. It seems to invite the length you want to create in the body, and it trains the body to sustain that length.

Exercising with the reformer is possible for anyone, at any level of fitness. It is also a wonderful conditioning tool for dancers. In fact, many dance companies use reformers on which dancers work out.



HOW A REFORMER WORKS?

A wide variety of exercises are done on the reformer to promote length, strength, flexibility, and balance. Most Pilates reformer exercises have to do with pushing or pulling the carriage or holding the carriage steady during an exercise as it is pulled on by the springs.

One of the best things about the reformer is its versatility. Exercises can be done lying down, sitting, standing, pulling the straps, pushing the foot bar, perched on the foot bar, perched on the shoulder blocks, with additional equipment, upside down, sideways, and all kinds of variations. In other words, the reformer can train many parts and dynamics of the body in many different ways with just one relatively sleek piece of equipment.